

Jesus said 'I am the Light of the World'

Old Testament Passages:

Isaiah 42 v5-7 God created the heavens and stretched them out; he fashioned the earth and all that lives there; he gave life and breath to all its people and now the Lord God says to his servant, "I, the Lord, have called you and given you power to see that justice is done on earth. Through you I will make a covenant with all peoples; through you I will bring light to the nations. You will open the eyes of the blind and set free those who sit in dark prisons. **Isaiah 49v6** "It is too trivial a thing that You should be my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will also make You a light to the nations That my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (Amplified)

New Testament Passages:

Matthew 4v16: The people who live in darkness will see **a great light**. On those who live in the dark land of death the **light** will shine. **John 8 v12¹²** Jesus spoke to the Pharisees again. "**I am the light of the world,**" he said. "Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness." **John 1:4-5** "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Outrageous claims

What is the most outrageous claim that you have heard?

When I first came to live in Cheltenham, home to the famous spy centre GCHQ, I was told that it had its fair share of eccentric, including some-one who claimed to be Lord Nelson. Not like the famous admiral who died in 1805, or even a re-incarnated Nelson, but he claimed to be Nelson himself. Outrageous.

What was the famous catchphrase of the boxer Mohammed Ali ? I am the greatest. He did not see he was one of the greatest, or even the best ever boxer, but just 'the greatest' – full stop! Outrageous.

Today we are going to look an even more outrageous claim that Jesus made, what it meant to those who heard it first, and what it means for us today.

The Illumination of the Temple

During the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) there was a great ceremony called the "Illumination of the Temple," which involved the ritual lighting of two or more golden oil-fed lamps in the Court of Women. To make it more holy, the priests used their own worn out clothing for wicks! These lamps were huge menorahs/candelabras each higher than a 7 storey building (seventy-five feet high). They were lit at night and the women processed to the courtyard with torches. So much light was given off it was said that it lit up all Jerusalem. Trumpets sounded, Israel's holy men then danced and sang psalms. It was to remind the people of the pillar of fire that had guided Israel in their wilderness journey, and of the Shekinah Glory of God that travelled with them in the Tabernacle. It was also a reminder that God had promised to send a Light to a sin-darkened world. God promised to send the Messiah to renew Israel's glory, release them from bondage, and restore their joy.

The claim from Jesus came during the Tabernacle Feast time, and it is thought that he may have gone to the Court of Women the next morning where the huge lampstands were still in place but no longer alight and left smouldering with the smell of oil in the air. Then at dawn, as the temple goers arrived for the morning worship, Jesus with the giant orb of the sun in the sky rising behind him, declares to the Pharisees and the crowd his claim - 'I am the light of the World'.

He didn't say that he brightens a place up a bit when he visits it. He claimed to be the actual source of light for the whole world. Just listen carefully to his words.

'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life, and will never walk in darkness'

How outrageous a claim that must have seemed from the young Nazarene Rabbi claiming to be the source of light for the world.

But he has already got some basis for that claim. John the Baptist had declared that Jesus was the **real** light—the light that comes into the world and shines on **all** people (John 1v9). Then the preaching and miracles of Jesus had

already shone light into many dark places. Yet it was still an outrageous claim. Why did Jesus say ‘I am the light of the World’? What did it mean to those that first heard those words? And what does it mean to us today.

Hero Comic Books – i) Story on the Up

When I was a boy I liked the DC comic books of super heroes. They often had one long story of a super-hero. I loved Batman. The comic pictures brought it to life. In the dark night of Gotham city the first sign of hope for victims of crime, is a light in the night sky, of the bat symbol, and then the bat hero arrives. I particularly liked the words they used for fight sounds, POW, ZAP, and my favourite KERBLAMM. It felt like you were there in the fight, doing in the baddies. Great hero storides.

The Jews have always seen themselves as people of a story, in a story, with their own super hero Yahweh their God. Their God was not a gold statue, he was not a God that just sat up on a cloud playing a harp, but one that was very interactive with his people, the Jews.

In this great story, there is some preamble on the creation and flood but the main story starts as God reveals himself to Abraham, and promises him as many descendants as the stars in the sky, and that he will be a blessing to all nations. His family grows and his grandson Jacob has 12 sons including Joseph, whose brothers sell him into slavery and he ends up in Egypt where he saves the nations from famine, and all the family are invited as guests to live there in the best land for shepherding. After 300 years they were great in number, making Pharaoh fearful and he enslaved them. Enter Moses, who leads the Exodus out of Egypt into the desert. God journeyed with them, with his shekinah glory shining on the Ark of the Covenant inside their tent the tabernacle. When Moses goes into the presence of God, he comes out with his face actually shining. At night he led them with a shining pillar of fire. So glory and presence shone and encouraged them. He protected them and he loved them. Sometimes God’s spirit comes upon their Holiest men, kings, judges or prophets and speaks to the Jews through these special ones. He continually pointed to one that was to come. After 40 years they enter their promised land and become a great nation of 12 tribes under King David. His son Solomon built this splendid temple. Glory days for the Jews. This part of the Jewish story is told and retold constantly to keep the memory alive.

The prophet to David was a wily old man called Nathan. 250 years later came another great prophets called Isaiah. Both had incredible prophecies which point to Jesus.

Nathans prophecy of a God-King

With David, scriptures tell us that God has found some-one after his own heart, one that would obey God and not go his own way. He was anointed by Samuel and received a full portion of Gods spirit. There was a real sense that when David became King it was as if God himself was king – and David despite some moral failures, became the greatest King that Israel ever had, ever! He set up the Jewish capital in Jerusalem and wanted to build the temple there, Nathan said that was the job for his son. However he also said that God would bless David with a future descendant who would have the same heart for God as he does, but whose kingdom would last forever. Nathan goes on to quote God as saying of him ‘I will be his Father, and he will be my Son’. An incredible prophecy. The one to come could be described as a messiah or God-King.

Isaiah’s prophecy of a Light to the World

Isaiah says (ch49v6) said to Jerusalem “ I will make you a light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” He made it clear that Israel were on a mission, to bring light and salvation not just to the Jews but to all the nations.

Isaiah backed this up with a different prophecy of the end-time banquet, which means eternal salvation, and was a banquet that all Jews definitely wanted to be at! But Isaiah makes it clear that this banquet, this salvation is not just for the Jews. He says (Isaiah 25v6-9) that “*the Lord Almighty will prepare a banquet for all the nations of the world—a banquet of the richest food and the finest wine.*”⁷ Here he will suddenly remove the cloud of sorrow that

has been hanging over all the nations". In other words he would take the Gentile nations out of their sad darkness and bring them into the light.

Story on the Down

Up to King David's reign, and his son Solomon building the temple, things are going well, and it is a great time for the Jews to be in the story.

But the plot saddens, as the people start forgetting their heroes great deeds for them and they start letting God down badly. God punishes them. The tribes divide, battles are lost and many are exiled to Babylon. The great Exile.

Oh to be forgiven by God, oh to be restored under another holy king like David. Eventually the Jews are allowed to return to rebuild the temple, but a series of invasions, poor rulers, and invaders, gives them this sense that the exile has never been fully reversed. After the words of the last recorded prophet in the Old Testament, Malachi, what is on the next page of your Bible. Nothing. Most Bibles have a blank page before the New Testament. This blank page represents a 400 year period of no revelation.

So as the story approaches the first century BC, they had had a hundred years of the Hasmonean dynasty of Kings and then the Romans invaded and they had to put up with the slightly mad puppet king Herod the Great and his unpopular sons inc Herod Antipas. These were not recognised as true Kings over the Jews because none of them were from the House of David. The Jews could see no human ruler rising up from their ranks to do what had to be done – defeat the pagan oppressor Rome, to cleanse the temple and restore the long-awaited rule of justice and peace.

The Jewish expectation

As the first century dawned there was an expectation that a new great chapter was about to be written. God would intervene soon in power, defeat the Romans making way for the God-King the Messiah, to rule over them.

They had remembered the Nathan prophecy. Only a God-king save them and restore the kingdom of God. That God King would be from the line of David. He would come to his people in Power and Glory, and establish his Kingdom on earth. The Jews believed this would happen, but that it would simply underpin their own aspirations of being a powerful nation under God. Generally, they believed that most of the Jews, regardless of behaviour, would be saved.

They had largely forgotten, the Isaiah prophecy that said they would be a light to the World, not just to the Jews, but salvation would come through their messiah to all nations. Being a light to the Gentiles, bringing them to the final banqueting table to receive their eternal salvation was not something they kept at the front of their consciousness. By 100 BC the Jewish book of Enoch had the end-time banquet rules such that if you are not Jewish you are not getting in. Then in the time of Jesus, the Qumran desert community were also expecting a Jew-only end-time banquet, but with the further restrictions of anyone with disabilities also got barred!

The three Jewish responses

So as we open the page of the Jewish hero book at the moment Jesus arrives on the scene as a young Rabbi, we can see that whilst the expectation of God intervening may be common, that there were some very different interpretations about what the Jews should do about it. Let's look at three of the responses at that time.

Withdraw: Some decided that the world was just too evil to engage with, and they should withdraw and set up their God focussed Jewish community in the desert regions, such as the Essene Community in Qumran. This way they could avoid the Romans, and all the other non-Jews, and when the Messiah came, he would no doubt have a special place for them as a reward for their austerity.

Compromise: Integrate with your occupiers. If you behave yourself and paid your taxes, and you accept the Roman way of life, and even profit quite nicely from it, like the tax collectors, like King Herod himself. Then hope that when God turns up he will some way still validate your life of compromise as being okay.

Fight: Say your prayers, sharpen your sword, fight a holy war, and if you physically win then it will also be a spiritual victory of Good over evil. Establish by force the kingdom of God. The Pharisees who Jesus was speaking to had sympathies for this approach, and for the zealot freedom fighters, whilst not engaging in such activities themselves.

The awaited Jewish Messiah

So the Jews were expecting a Messiah, this would be a God-like king in the line of David, who would finally restore Israel again as a free kingship. They thought that he would come with power and might, sweep away the enemies and build up their defences. Their chequered history of disobedience would be forgiven and the nation would be newly blessed by God again, and the glory days like they had under King David would return. The Jews were right though in the sense that God was about to move again in history in a dramatic way. It would be though in a way which whilst fully consistent with their scriptures, would be so completely unexpected by the Jews, that when he arrived, he would be hardly recognisable as the Messiah.

Jesus arrival on earth at that time was no random event in their story. God didn't think, oh when and where shall I put him, 21st century Syria, Renaissance France or first century Palestine. The story was well constructed. Matthew 1v17 tells us that there were 14 generations from Abraham to David; 14 generations from David to the Exile in Babylon, and 14 generations from the Exile to the birth of the Messiah.

The fourth way

So Jesus came as the promised Messiah with a completely different way of fulfilling Gods promise to move into History again, and bring home the kingdom of God. He would **not** do it by might and power as the Zealots wanted, and as the Pharisees hoped for, but by a counter-cultural revolution of love for everyone, even your Jewish enemies, even the Gentiles, even the invading force of the Romans. Jesus himself would set the example of how to live this new kingdom style life. He would call his followers to live a new life which is **motivated by love and empowered by Gods Spirit**. He would call his followers to live lives where you go the **extra mile**, turn the **other cheek**, forgive **70x7** times, and gain your life by **losing it for others**. He would call his followers not to take one of the 3 common options of withdrawal, compromise, or fighting, but take the fourth road of transforming the world with love.

His agenda for Israel was to leave off this selfish and frantic pursuit of self-defence, reinforced by all its ancestral codes and traditions, but instead embrace their call to be the light of the world, and the salt of the earth.

Jesus appears to see his mission to fulfil the Isaiah prophecy that Israel had so far failed in. He on their behalf would first become the Light of the World, as well as being their God-King. He would then shine his light through his followers to the World.

On the move

After Jesus is baptised by John, he sets out on a three year journey to spread his message on how to live, on how the Jews could bring about the Kingdom of God on Earth. He went around the small towns and villages of Galilee, not so much as a wandering preacher, but more like a revolutionary politician drumming up support for his new revolutionary movement. He was on the campaign trail. His new movement needed time to grow, and so to avoid too much unwanted attention from those in authority who might put an early stop to his movement, he steered clear of the two main centres of population in Galilee which were Tiberius (regional capital) and Sepphoris (30,000 strong city with a 4000 seater amphitheatre). Instead he had his base in the little fishing port of Capernaum, a population of just 1500.

He preached a message of 'Repent and Believe', which in this context was for the Jews to give up their old belief systems of what was important and trust in Jesus, and in his new way of bringing Gods kingdom to Earth.

456 – Fulfilling the Prophecies

Jesus may have been doing something that the Jews weren't expecting, but he was still fulfilling all their prophecies about a Messiah, not just Nathans God-King and Isaiah's Light of the World. After he died and rose again, he was in his resurrected body walking with two travellers on the Road to Emmaus, he explained to them what was said about himself Jesus, in all of the Old Testament, beginning with the books of Moses and the writings of all the Prophets.

It must have been a long conversation, as there are 456 Old Testament messianic references. I have a book with them all 456 listed in an appendix of a Victorian book. And that does not include the additional 558 separate messianic references known from other Rabbinic writings.

The final chapter

So Jesus fulfils the Jewish prophecies but in a way that is both unexpected and countercultural. As he grows in understanding of his God given mission, he realises this will take him to the Cross and in doing so he will start to **wrap up** this great story of the chosen tribe of Israel. This is not just a new chapter, this will be the last chapter in their story. A story of ups and downs in which God has travelled with them, accepting their sacrifices and hearing their prayers. It is a great story which will be read and reread for centuries to come, and from which there is plenty to learn from and be inspired by.

But they have come to rely on the temple, and on animal sacrifices and it has been big business for the Priests. Jesus announces that it has finally served its purpose, the God-King has finally arrived and through his sacrifice on the cross, their Messiah will enable all people who call on him to be saved. They failed to be a light to the World so he has become that for them.

But in doing so, he has taken those cultural elements that the religious people held so dear, the magnificent temple with all its treasures, the frequent animal sacrifices, and he summed up their fate in 3 words. What were they ? (- no not POW, ZAP, KERBLAMM!) As he hung from the cross, he cried out 'IT IS FINISHED'. That's it. They have served their purpose. I have come as the Light of the World, I have led a life without blemish, so that I can now die and take on myself the sins of the world, so that others will be saved. He hands his Spirit over to his Father ("Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"). The Father then for our sakes turns his back on Jesus. On the cross is the only time that Jesus refers to his Father as God, not as Abba (Daddy). My God, My God why have you forsaken me? Then death consumes him, and his soul voluntarily picks up the weight of the sin of the World, which plummets him into Hell. As the Light of the World, Jesus Christ is extinguished, so is the light from the sun, and the sky suddenly goes pitch black from noon til 3pm, and POW, ZAP, KERBLAMM, the thick curtain in the Temple's Holy of Holies that had separated the people from the presence of God was miraculously torn in two. God's presence would no longer be self-constricted to the Temple's privilege, it will from now on be available to all people. The story of how God chose just one race, the descendants of Abraham, to be blessed with their sole privileges on God, and then showcase Gods goodness and power, has played out the final scene.

THE END. (Drop comic book on floor). Wow – what an ending.

The Sequel

Many popular books and films have a sequel. Jaws, was a great shark film. Then there was Jaws 2, and then Jaws 3D, and even Jaws 4. The story of the Jewish nations walk with God has a sequel, which has the same tag line as Jaws 4 – This time it's personal.

So the first story is that of the Jewish nation being set apart from God, with his shekinah glory and presence with them in their tabernacle or temple, and the Holy Spirit resting on a rare few. It ends with the much awaited

Messiah finally arriving, but surprising them by bringing in God kingdom not by power and might in the traditional sense, but by sacrificial love, and by paying the ultimate sacrifice himself, bringing the salvation to all people.

The sequel has a dramatic start. The grave could not hold Jesus because he was blameless, so he rises up from the dead, encourages his disciples then ascends to heaven. The prophet Joel had foretold the day when God would make his **Holy Spirit available to all people**. This day had finally come. So we see at Pentecost a small band of Jesus disciples, being filled with his Spirit, reflecting his Light into dark places.

The rest of the story is about how that Light is spread throughout the world. Each person that is saved, can have the Holy Spirit, and can reflect Gods light. making the Holy Spirit available to all who call upon him, and reflecting his light through all those that follow the now invisible Jesus, and commit themselves to following his teachings and the example he set when down on Earth. At first the light of Jesus could only be reflected through a hand full of believers, but the story that we are now living in has 2 billion Christians, all with the potential to reflect the Light of the World, and be beacons of light and hope in even the darkest corners of the earth.

The first story tells of the Gods loving relationship established with one people group. The second is the story of how Gods light and love is spread to all people groups across the world. This second story will continue until Jesus returns.

Two thousand years into this second story, and you get your chance to play your part with the super-hero Jesus, his Father and his Spirit. It is your turn to reflect the Light of the World, to continue the progress of the Gospel to be a blessing to all nations, to follow in the footsteps of Jesus

But you're thinking – that was Jesus, of course he was successful because he was God, I'm just me, a human with loads of shortfalls. How can I follow his example and be a light to the world?

How did he do it ?

So how did Jesus, born of a woman, have been the light of the World, and the fulfilment of all the prophecies? How did he manage to live a sinless life, so that his sacrifice could pay the price of our wrongdoings once and for all, and complete the great story.

We cannot simply say that Jesus did all that stuff because He was fully God, and it was easy for him to live a right life. Jesus was born of a woman and was fully human. Now whilst he was still God from birth, having the imprint or DNA of God, he gave up any outward expression of Gods divinity [Philippians 2v7]. In other words he stripped himself of Godly powers to be born on earth. at his birth, but scriptures tell us that he gave up his ou

This means he could not be omni-present, which means in all places at one time; he could not be omniscient which means know everything about everything straight away – He didn't quote Isaiah 61 in the manger, he burped, cried and pooped like every other baby. He could not be omnipotent, all powerful, because he had chosen to have the vulnerability and restrictions of a human person.

So everything he did, he did not with his own God powers but as a human, listening to his Father and being empowered by the Holy Spirit. Why is this so important. Because if he did it as God, then we have no chance in doing it ourselves, because we are not God. However if he did it all as Human, then we every chance of doing what he did it, and following in his footsteps.

Three Keys

I think there are at least 3 key ways in which he did this, and they are

1. Wanted to always do the right thing. [perfect righteousness]
2. He learnt what the right thing was. [Through his fellowship with God i.e. He spent a lot of time praying]
3. He had the power to do the right thing. [Letting the Holy Spirit live in him, and work through him].

1. We need to do the right thing (Righteousness)

JESUS: Jesus lived his whole life in Righteousness, which just means a right standing with God. He did the right things that his Father wanted him to do. But then we ask the question, wasn't that easy for him? Was Jesus actually capable of doing wrong? The devil clearly thought Jesus could sin, because he tempted him, and surely must have only done so knowing that he could be vulnerable to that temptation. Jesus could have done wrong, just like we do. But he always won the battle, he stayed righteous, he didn't sin. For which we must be eternally grateful. If he had sinned, then he could not have been the perfect sacrifice. It was because he had remained righteous, and without sin, that his death had the power to overcome sin.

US: When you accept Jesus into your life, he takes you from darkness into the light. One part of that, is that he shows you what is wrong in your life, and encourages you to put them right. Change your ways.

Our culture has a high tolerance to sinful life-styles. We tend to let people just get on with their lives, do what they want to without any challenge to excessive drinking, drugs, gambling, affairs, violent viewing, selfishness with finance, lies and deceit, fiddling your tax form, stealing from work, being unfaithful etc.

As long as it is not me that is disadvantaged by it, we easily turn a blind eye. But then it is too easy to have low standards yourself because the acceptable benchmark is so low. Jesus came to set us an example of how to live righteous lives, to do what is right. It is not a condition of being saved, but doing what is right, is pleasing to Jesus, and we try our best out of our love for him for all he has done for us. We need to be more urgent in our desire to love him back, and please him, by leading more Godly lives, by becoming more like him. Easy to say, hard to do. But the next two keys will help.

2. Knowing the right thing (Prayer / Listening to God)

JESUS: How can you do the right thing, if you don't know what the right thing for you to be doing is? The answer for Jesus was to spend a lot of time seeking advice from his Father. In other words he prayed, he prayed a lot. He prayed alone, he prayed in public, he prayed for meals, before healing, after healing, before making decisions. i.e. He prayed all night before choosing his 12 disciples. He was always getting up early and going to a quiet place. If he was in the hustle and bustle of Jerusalem, he would escape to the Mount of Olives to pray. Jesus prayed a lot. He grew in knowledge and he grew in wisdom because he grew closer to his Father God, because he spent a lot of time with him. He didn't make being too busy an excuse, he made prayer a priority. That way, he was able to reveal the love of the Father.

US: Just as Jesus prayed about all things, then we need to do the same. There is no revival, or great ministry, or great evangelist that wasn't birthed in prayer and lots of it. Convincing yourself that you are too busy to pray is a false economy. I have found time and time again, that the more you pray the better things go. I have never regretted any time spent in prayer. I found that in preparing the programmes for youth retreats, that the longer the team spent praying at the prep meetings, then the quicker and easier the preparation went, and of the course the weekend away was more blessed. We have to spend time with God, quiet times where we can just be with him. Then we can send up bullet prayers through the day, we can listen to worship in the car or on mobile devices when exercising. We can meet together pray and worship. We just need to pray. If Jesus need to do it regularly, then so do we

3. Empowered to do the right thing (Living a Holy Spirit life)

JESUS: Jesus was filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. At his baptism, the heavens opened and the Spirit descended on him, visibly and like a dove. Later when after he confessed to be the Christ, the Messiah, we find Jesus up a mountain with his three closest disciples, and this time bright cloud overshadowed him and Jesus face shone in the Spirit. Incredibly Moses and Elijah appeared from heaven also and with stood with them. A great symbol that he was the fulfilment of both the Law of the Moses, and the Prophets. The gospels tell us that the Spirit gave him the words of the Father to speak out, [John 3v34 The one whom God has sent speaks God's words, because God gives him the fullness of his **Spirit**]. It also gave him the power to drive our demons and do other miracles, and enabled true worship of the Father. He summed it up nicely by taking a prophecy of Messiah and

owning it when he spoke to the synagogue in Nazareth and said ““The **Spirit** of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed”.

For those captive in darkness, Jesus brings the light of freedom. For those blind to Truth, Jesus recovers their sight. All can move out of darkness into Light.

The Spirit was his enabler, and was with him right up to his final moment when he cried on the cross “Father! In your hands I place my **spirit!**”

US: The same spirit that empowered Jesus, he makes available for us today. Jesus said to his followers (which now includes us), that as bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will the Father in heaven give the Holy **Spirit** to those who ask him! (Lk 11v13) Don't be afraid to ask for good things from God, because he wants to bless us. If we are to be effective for Jesus, then we need to listen to what the Spirit is telling us, and we need to step out in faith and do things in his power. We are not the light if we afraid to shine, because of what others may think of us. I recently went to a church in Reading called the Gate, where the pastor was calling every member to be a disciple of Jesus, and share the Gospel, every one in the Church. He said he would keep on preaching the same message until they got it or sacked him. The Pastor brought in an American evangelist for four weeks to invigorate his Church in evangelism, and expecting to perhaps add 10 or more to the congregation via street evangelism. In those 4 weeks something extraordinary happened and nearly 2000 made first time commitments, essentially from the efforts of one modest sized church being anointed and empowered by the Spirit. It was the children that were leading the way, bringing many of their friends to a decision to accept Jesus in their lives. They brought the light. They are now in the great sequel.

Conclusion

There are two stories, two covenants, the old and the new. Both have an Exodus at the centre with an escape to Freedom. In the first the Jewish Nation escape from slavery in Egypt. In the sequel, it is the turn for the rest of the world to escape from darkness into light.

The first story gave us the prophecies, and heralded in Jesus, the God-King, the Messiah, the Light of the World. Jesus said ‘If you follow me, you will have the light of life and never walk in darkness. He is the hero.

The sequel gives his followers the task being his hands and feet on earth, of reflecting his light into all the dark corners of the world. His church are now the heroes, but giving all the glory back to him.

Jesus set the example of how to be the light. Lead good and righteous lives, prioritise time in Prayer so you know what to do, and be continually open to the Holy Spirit so he can empower you to do what you know is right. That way, we can do his will, we can reflect his glory and we can be a light to the world.

How are we doing? Do we **withdraw** from Non-Christians, do we just live a life of **compromise**, are we over-aggressive or defensive about what we believe, putting people off the Gospel . Or are we like Jesus compelled by love and empowered by the Spirit, forgiveness 70x7, going the extra mile, turning the other cheek, losing your old life in order to gain a new one, and showing the Fathers love whoever God puts in front of you every day.

Other than your name, what will be written on your page of the sequel. What will it say about **your** life, the contribution **you** made to bringing in Gods Kingdom on earth. This is our chance our time. I pray for each of us that our page does not stay empty. I pray that Jesus can look down on each one of us, see us reflecting his goodness to the world, and make that outrageous claim on each one of us – You are the Light of the World.

Amen.